

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF NEVADA

MAURICE HOWARD,

Plaintiff,

v.

HIGH DESERT STATE PRISON  
MEDICAL STAFF,

Defendant.

Case No. 2:22-cv-00601-GMN-VCF

ORDER

Plaintiff Maurice Howard brings this civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 to redress constitutional violations that he claims he suffered while incarcerated at High Desert State Prison. (ECF No. 1-1.) On June 23, 2022, this Court ordered Howard to file an amended complaint within 60 days. (ECF No. 3.) The Court warned Howard that the action could be dismissed if he failed to file an amended complaint by that deadline. (*Id.* at 8.) That deadline expired and Howard did not file an amended complaint, move for an extension, or otherwise respond.

**I. DISCUSSION**

District courts have the inherent power to control their dockets and “[i]n the exercise of that power, they may impose sanctions including, where appropriate . . . dismissal” of a case. *Thompson v. Hous. Auth. of City of Los Angeles*, 782 F.2d 829, 831 (9th Cir. 1986). A court may dismiss an action based on a party’s failure to obey a court order or comply with local rules. See *Carey v. King*, 856 F.2d 1439, 1440-41 (9th Cir. 1988) (affirming dismissal for failure to comply with local rule requiring *pro se* plaintiffs to keep court apprised of address); *Malone v. U.S. Postal Service*, 833 F.2d 128, 130 (9th Cir. 1987) (dismissal for failure to comply with court order). In determining whether to dismiss an action on one of these grounds, the Court must consider: (1) the public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation; (2) the Court’s need to manage its docket; (3) the risk of prejudice to the defendants; (4) the public policy favoring disposition of

1 cases on their merits; and (5) the availability of less drastic alternatives. See *In re*  
2 *Phenylpropanolamine Prod. Liab. Litig.*, 460 F.3d 1217, 1226 (9th Cir. 2006) (quoting  
3 *Malone*, 833 F.2d at 130).

4 The first two factors, the public's interest in expeditiously resolving this litigation  
5 and the Court's interest in managing its docket, weigh in favor of dismissing Howard's  
6 claims. The third factor, risk of prejudice to defendants, also weighs in favor of dismissal  
7 because a presumption of injury arises from the occurrence of unreasonable delay in filing  
8 a pleading ordered by the court or prosecuting an action. See *Anderson v. Air West*, 542  
9 F.2d 522, 524 (9th Cir. 1976). The fourth factor—the public policy favoring disposition of  
10 cases on their merits—is greatly outweighed by the factors favoring dismissal.

11 The fifth factor requires the Court to consider whether less drastic alternatives can  
12 be used to correct the party's failure that brought about the Court's need to consider  
13 dismissal. See *Yourish v. Cal. Amplifier*, 191 F.3d 983, 992 (9th Cir. 1999) (explaining  
14 that considering less drastic alternatives *before* the party has disobeyed a court order  
15 does not satisfy this factor); accord *Pagtalunan v. Galaza*, 291 F.3d 639, 643 & n.4 (9th  
16 Cir. 2002) (explaining that “the persuasive force of” earlier Ninth Circuit cases that  
17 “implicitly accepted pursuit of less drastic alternatives prior to disobedience of the court's  
18 order as satisfying this element[,]” *i.e.*, like the “initial granting of leave to amend coupled  
19 with the warning of dismissal for failure to comply[,]” have been “eroded” by *Yourish*).  
20 Courts “need not exhaust every sanction short of dismissal before finally dismissing a  
21 case, but must explore possible and meaningful alternatives.” *Henderson v. Duncan*, 779  
22 F.2d 1421, 1424 (9th Cir. 1986). Because this action cannot realistically proceed until  
23 and unless Howard files an amended complaint, the only alternative is to enter a second  
24 order setting another deadline. But the reality of repeating an ignored order is that it often  
25 only delays the inevitable and squanders the Court's finite resources. The circumstances  
26 here do not indicate that this case will be an exception: there is no hint that Howard needs  
27 additional time or evidence that he did not receive the Court's screening order. Setting

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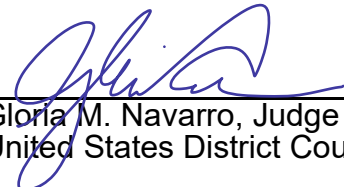
1 another deadline is not a meaningful alternative given these circumstances. So the fifth  
2 factor favors dismissal.

3 **II. CONCLUSION**

4 Having thoroughly considered these dismissal factors, the Court finds that they  
5 weigh in favor of dismissal. It is therefore ordered that this action is dismissed without  
6 prejudice based on Howard's failure to file an amended complaint in compliance with this  
7 Court's June 23, 2022, order and for failure to state a claim. The Clerk of Court is directed  
8 to enter judgment accordingly and close this case. No other documents may be filed in  
9 this now-closed case. If Howard wishes to pursue his claims, he must file a complaint in  
10 a new case.

11 It is further ordered that Howard's application to proceed *in forma pauperis* (ECF  
12 No. 1) is denied as moot.

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14 DATED THIS 19 day of September 2022.

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18 Gloria M. Navarro, Judge  
19 United States District Court  
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